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## UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

### Japanese knotweed



**Question:** We have a plant that looks like bamboo taking over our yard. What can we do?

**Answer:** Not true bamboo, but an extremely aggressive member of the buckwheat family, Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is a common perennial weed found throughout New Hampshire. It emerges early in the spring and can grow to form thickets up to 8 feet high and so dense that they shade out all other plant species. The stem is hollow and jointed; the leaves are 3 to 6 inches long and egg-shaped. The creamy flowers appear in late summer. It spreads via rhizomes (underground stems) which can reach up to 10 feet in

depth after one year. Large colonies reduce the diversity of plant species and significantly alter natural habitat. Once established, it is very difficult to remove.

The most effective way to control this species is to prevent it from becoming established by removing it as soon as you find it colonizing an area. Be sure to bag and dispose of all plant parts: even a small fragment can start a new stand. Repeated cutting (3 to 4 times a year) will keep it from spreading, but won't eliminate it. A good strategy for eliminating established stands is to follow a 3-step process. In late June cut or mow down the stalks. Allow the knotweed to regrow. After the middle of August spray the knotweed with glyphosate (sometimes called RoundUp). It may require 3 to 5 years of repeated treatments before your knotweed is effectively controlled. Be sure to read and follow all herbicide labels carefully before use.

**Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at [answers@unh.edu](mailto:answers@unh.edu)**